WHITE HOUSE DINNERS.

They Are Elaborate and Expensive State Affairs.

An Apocryphal Story About Mrs. Morton and an Ignorant Guest—How a Western Man Got Along Swimmingly.

[Special Washington Letter.]

The state dinners which are given by the president of the United States, at the white house, are elaborate and costly affairs. The president on such occasions invites all members of his cabinet, with their wives and daughters, to dine with him. The president and his wife, with their guests, enter the state dining-room at eight o'clock in the evening, and they usually remain at the table for an hour or more. The time is occupied not alone in eating, but in gossiping and nibbling at

VERY WEAK LEMONADE.

the numerous dainties which are brought in by courses and removed from time to time by quiet, expert, experienced waiters. The great dining-room is decorated with flowers from the white house conservatory, the table is adorned with floral designs, and everything that wealth can procure for adornment and pleasure is skillfully arranged by artistic fingers.

The president similarily entertains the members of the diplomatic corps in the state dining-room once every year. These gentlemen are ambassadors, envoys and ministers from all of the nations of the world, and they are accompanied by the ladies of their families. These state dinners are so named on account of their official character; but affairs of state are never discussed on such occasions. It would be bad form to "talk shop" at such a distinguished social gathering.

From time to time the president also gives state dinners to members of the senate, members of the house, the supreme court, and the leading bureau officials who rank next to the members of his cabinet. He also gives public receptions to the army and navy officers, and to citizens of the United States who desire to pay their respects to their chief magistrate.

During the winter and spring until the Lenten season begins there is a continual round of dinner parties given in Washington by men and women who are leaders in the social swim. The vice president entertains the same functionaries who are banqueted at the white house. The senators, representatives and justices of the supreme court give elaborate dinners; and all of them take place at night under the gas and electric lights in the palaces of the the patricians of our republic. It never costs less than $500 for the flowers which are used upon each occasion, while sometimes more than $1,000 has been expended solely for floral decorations for one evening.

One evening when the wife of Vice President Morton was giving a select entertainment she was horrified by the action of one of her guests, who, though a man of political prominence, was not acquainted with the use of modern doilies, which are intended for decoration, and not for utility. She had just imported a set from Paris, and each of them was hand painted in water colors. On the evening in question they were displayed for the first time at dessert under the finger bowls. Imagine the surprise of Mrs. Morton at seeing her guest, so famous as a legislator, and yet so ignorant of social amenities, coolly dip his fingers deep in the water and wipe them with the greatest nonchalance upon one of her precious new works of art on filmy bolting cloth. The costly little doily was a wreck, and the entire set was spoiled; but Mrs. Morton was so polite and well bred that she took her own doily and used it in the same manner. Her other guests knew better; but they followed the example of Mrs. Morton, in order to save the misguided statesman from the mortification of realizing the grave error which he had committed. His wife soon heard of the matter, and it is presumed that she gave him a severe curtain lecture; for, about six weeks later, a handsome set of imported doilies was sent to Mrs. Morton with the card of the statesman pinned upon the package. No word of explanation was ever said or written, and the incident was thus closed.

A similar story is related of an incident which occurred when William C. Whitney was secretary of the navy. His wife was a philosophical woman, and when a guest of hers smashed a most precious teacup, she calmly picked up another and fractured it, saying: "Aren't they absurdly brittle?" But, of course, she was too well bred to make any other remark, and was obliged to content herself with mournfully describing the melancholy incident to sympathetic lady friends who realized what an embarrassing situation the lady was in when her elegant and dainty teacup was clumsily broken. People who are not familiar with the customs of the world of society make many errors at dinner and supper tables; but well-bred men and women would almost allow their houses to be torn down over their heads, rather than to say or do anything to show their resentment or annoyance.

The man who used Mrs. Morton's doily for a napkin had his counterpart in the almost mythical fellow who drank the water from his finger bowl and afterwards remarked that he thought it was "very weak lemonade." Or in the Irish parliamentarian who saw people in London nibbling their celery, and whispered to his wife: "Luk at the people atin' the white bokays."

A western senator gave a "stag" party to the gentlemen in congress from his own state. Among other things he had Rochefort and other imported cheeses; and after the party adjourned one of the congressmen remarked to a colleague: "I s'pose the senator must have been mortified if he noticed that all of his cheese was spoiled. I ate some of it just for appearances, but it nearly made me sick. It was awful stuff, and the smell was very rank."

At big dinner parties it is well for a novice to watch what other people do, and follow their example. In that way mistakes may be avoided. There are so many new things being invented constantly for adornment and use by the social leaders that one must be going into society all the time in order to keep the run of them. A paper published here recently printed what was claimed to be a true story concerning a new member of congress who had been a farmer all his life, but who managed to get through a state dinner without making any blunders, because he carefully watched the others, and did exactly what they did with every utensil and with every edible. From the outset he was very much interested in a tiny silver hay fork at the side of his plate, the likeness of which he saw the other people use for their raw oysters. He did the same and was so far all right, helping himself to salt with a very small gold spade provided for the purpose. It reminded him of the tool he had employed many a time to dig potatoes with, save for the metal. Of potatoes themselves, mashed, he was presently helped to a portion, and he found that his fellow-guests utilized an instrument, the like of which he was also supplied with, to push the vegetable upon their fork. Subsequently he learned that the instrument was called a "pusher," but at the time it seemed to him nothing more or less than a diminutive hoe, in the exact shape of which it was undeniably constructed.

HE CLAIMED THE CHEESE WAS SPOILED.

But there was one utensil that made him extremely nervous, inasmuch as he could not imagine for what purpose it was intended, and he was carefully guarding himself against a possible error. For course after course he watched his fellow guests to see when they would bring the curious tool into play. It was not, however, until the asparagus came on that he saw an eminent diplomat who sat opposite him, pick up the silver hay rake from beside his plate and employ it to convey the vegetable to his mouth. It is said that he afterwards remarked to a friend: "If we're going into farming for a dinner table, why don't we have a threshing machine to make the beefsteak tender and a mowing machine to clear off the crumbs?"

That man was new to all of the pomp and dazzle of society at the national capital, but it is safe to assume that he will never destroy a doily nor shatter any costly chinaware, nor mistake a napkin for a handkerchief and carry it away from the table in his pocket. He keeps his eyes open and keenly observes others. When a boy he probably learned the aphorism to "do as Romans do, when in Rome."

Although affairs of state are never considered at state dinners, very many important national matters are discussed and settled at private dinner parties, where three or more leading members of a great political party gather around a table in the dining-room of a senator or cabinet minister and discuss subjects of grave moment while they eat and drink and smoke their cigars. It was in Senator Gorman's dining-room one night in June, 1893, that the fate of the original Wilson bill was determined. And, in 1890, Senator Evarts, of New York, quietly invited "just a few senators" to dinner one evening, cautioning each one to say nothing about it, as it was to be "a strictly private and select affair." It was a genuine surprise party to every senator, for, when all were assembled, every republican member of the senate was present. The newspaper men knew nothing of it. And it was then and there that the republican senatorial programme was agreed upon with relation to the McKinley bill. SMITH D FRY.

As He Pronounced It.

"How do you pronounce the last syllable of that word 'butterine?'" asked the customer.

"The last syllable is silent," stiffly replied the grocer's clerk. — Chicago Tribune.

THE POPE'S DAILY LIFE.

It Is Full of Occupation from Morning Till Night.

His Habits Are Much the Same as When He Was a Cardinal—Daily Mass in His Private Chapel—Every-Day Routine Work.

Marion Crawford, in an interesting article in the Century, says that in spite of his great age, the holy father enjoys excellent health, and leads a life full of occupations from morning till night. He has in no respect changed his habits since the time when he lived at Perugia as cardinal. He rises very early, and when at about six o'clock in the morning, his valet, Pio Centra, enters his little bedroom, he more often finds him risen than asleep. He is accustomed to sleep little—not more than four or five hours at night, though he rests awhile after dinner. We are told that sometimes he has been found asleep in his chair by his writing-table at dawn, not having been to bed at all. Of late he frequently says mass in a chapel in his private apartments and the mass is served by Pio Centra. On Sundays and feast days he says it in another chapel preceding the throneroom. The little chapel is of small dimensions, but by opening the door into the neighboring room a number of persons can assist at the mass. The permission, when given, is obtained on application to the "maestro di camera," and is generally conceded only to distinguished foreign persons. After saying mass himself, the holy father immediately hears a second one, said by one of the private chaplains on duty for the week, whose business it is to take care of the altar and to assist. Frequently he gives the communion with his own hands to those who are present at his mass. After mass he breakfasts upon coffee and goat's milk, and this milk is supplied from goats kept in the vatican gardens—a reminiscence of Carpineto and of the mountaineer's early life.

Every day at about ten he receives the secretary of state, Cardinal Rampolla, and converses with him for a good hour or more upon current affairs. On Tuesdays and Fridays the secretary of state receives the diplomatic corps in his own apartments, and on those days the under-secretary, Mgr. Rinaldini, confers with the pope in

LATEST PICTURE OF POPE LEO.

his chief's place. Cardinal Mario Mocenni, acting prefect of the "holy apostolic palaces," is received by the pope when he has business to expound. On the first and third Fridays of each month the maggiordomo, Mgr. della Volpe, is received, and so on, in order, the cardinal prefects of the several Roman congregations, the under-secretaries, and all others in charge of the various offices. In the papal antechamber there is a list of them, with the days of their audiences.

During the morning he receives the cardinals, the bishops "ad limina," ambassadors who are going away on leave or who have just returned, princes and members of the Roman nobility and distinguished foreigners.

At ten o'clock he takes a cup of broth brought by Centra. At two in the afternoon, or a little earlier, he dines. He is most abstemious, although he has an excellent digestion. His private physician, Dr. Giuseppe Lapponi, has been heard to say that he himself eats more at one meal than the holy father eats in a week.

Every day, unless indisposed, some one is received in private audience. These audiences are usually for the cardinal prefects of the congregations, the patriarchs, archbishops and bishops who are in Rome at the time, and distinguished personages.

When the weather is fine, the pope generally walks or drives in the garden. He is carried out of his apartments to the gate in a sedan-chair by the liveried "sediarii," or chair-porters; or, if he goes out by the small door known as that of Paul V., the carriage awaits him there, and he gets in with the Cameriere Segreto Partecipante, who is always a monsignor. It is well to say here, for the benefit of non-Catholics, that "monsignori" are not necessarily bishops, nor even consecrated priests, the title being really a secular one. Two noble guards of the corps of 50 gentlemen known under that name ride beside the carriage doors.

During the great heat of summer the pope after saying mass, goes into the garden about nine in the morning, and spends the whole day there, receiving every one in the garden pavilion as he would in the vatican. He dines there, too, and rests afterwards guarded by the gendarmes on duty, to whom he generally sends a measure of good wine—another survival of a country custom; and in the cool of the day he again gets into his carriage, and often does not return to the vatican till after sunset, toward the hour of Ave Maria.

In the evening, about an hour later—at "one of the night," according to old Roman computation of time—he attends at the recitation of the rosary, or evening prayers, by Mgr. Mazzolini, his private chaplain, and he requires his immediate attendants to assist also. He then retires to his room, where he reads, studies or writes verses, and at about ten o'clock he eats a light supper.

FACTS ABOUT THERMOMETERS.

Sensitive Instrument Which Registers Heat from the Moon.

To tell whether a thermometer accurately does its work invert the instrument, says the New York World. If the mercury does not fall to the end or if it breaks into several small columns, the thermometer contains air and is inaccurate. If perfectly made the slender thread should fill the tube or break off at the bulb and fall to the end of the tube.

There is another interesting fact about thermometers. Nine persons out of ten think the mercurial column round, but that is not the case. The thread of mercury in thermometers is flat. If it were round the column could hardly be seen, for the opening of the tube is as fine as the finest thread. Some eight of ten years ago a Boston manufacturer introduced a scheme of coating the back of the tube with white sizing. That makes the column of mercury stand out clear and distinct.

Thermometers are cheaper and better than ever before. You can now buy a heat marker for 25 cents, but a first-class instrument will cost you two dollars. A cheap instrument is like a cheap watch—it is unreliable. The reason for this is that a perfect thermometer has a scale of its own. The cheap thermometer is made on guess work. Hence you see a difference of two, three or five degrees between thermometers in the same locality on the same day.

The most sensitive heat marker is the Crookes. It consists of four arms suspended on a steel pivot, rotating like a miniature wind gauge, and the whole affair is inclosed in a glass tube from which the air has been exhausted. The light of a candle one or two feet away causes the arms to rotate. Quite as sensitive is the thermopile, which is used to detect the faint rays of heat transmitted from the moon and stars to this cold world.

New Woman in Smyrna.

The new woman has reached Smyrna. There is in the quartier Saint-Dimitre, says the Stamboul, a comely young fellow who abandoned his sweetheart for a richer woman, just as sometimes or oftener happens in countries more "civilized" than Syria. But on the marriage day, just as the ceremony was about to be performed, his first love appeared in the church at the head of a few determined followers, boldly seized the stupefied bridegroom, thrust him in a carriage, picked up a priest en passant and then the twain were speedily made one in another church, while the rich girl was left to her tears in single wretchedness. Glorious, wasn't it? Sad, wasn't it?

Peat fiber can be bleached to snowy whiteness, and will dye any color. One of the great advantages of cloth made from peat fiber is that it is entirely antiseptic, and possesses qualities which render it inimical to parasitical organism. In appearance the finer makes are quite equal to the best tweeds, and closely resemble the camel's-hair cloth.

Mr. Jake Limer, of Breckinridge county, is said to have a son six years old who weighs 145 pounds and has the strength of a man.